
The Management Project from the point of view of education professionals

El Proyecto de Dirección (PdD) desde el punto de vista de los/las profesionales de la educación

从教育专业人士的角度看管理项目

Проект управления школы с точки зрения практикующих специалистов в области образования

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to know the opinion that education professionals have about the Management Project (PdD) of educational centres, after exploring different existing regulations in five autonomous communities (CCAA), in order to make a more unified proposal.

The methodology used was qualitative, analysing different legislations of some CCAA, and quantitative by analysing the results obtained from a questionnaire applied to 530 professionals in the educational field.

The results indicated that there are some discrepancies in the regulations of different CCAA. Education professionals consider that the PdD should have about 30 pages and that the most important sections are the objectives, lines of action and organization of the centre. Most consider that it should be presented to the Senate and the School Council that the time between the summons and the deposit should be 3 months and that it requires prior training. Differences were observed in the differential analysis according to age, gender, and professional profile.

The conclusions are the importance of receiving specific formation on PdD is drawn and that the regulations should be standardized, considering the opinions of education professionals.

Keywords: Management project, headteacher, educational legislation, teaching personnel.

Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación es conocer la opinión que tienen los/las profesionales de la educación sobre el Proyecto de Dirección (PdD) de centros educativos, después de explorar diferentes normativas existentes en cinco comunidades autónomas (CCAA), para poder realizar una propuesta más unificada.

La metodología utilizada fue tanto cualitativa, analizando diferentes legislaciones de las cinco CCAA, como cuantitativa mediante el análisis de los resultados obtenidos a partir de un cuestionario aplicado a 530 profesionales del ámbito educativo.

Los resultados indicaron que existen algunas discrepancias en la reglamentación de diferentes CCAA. Los/las profesionales de la educación consideran que el PdD debería tener unas 30 páginas y que los apartados más importantes son los objetivos, líneas de actuación y organización del centro. La mayoría cree que debe presentarse al Claustro y al Consejo Escolar, que el tiempo entre la convocatoria y el depósito debería ser de 3 meses y que requiere formación previa. En el análisis diferencial se observaron diferencias según la edad, género y perfil profesional.

Como conclusión se extrae la importancia de recibir una formación específica sobre el PdD y que deberían homogeneizarse las reglamentaciones, considerando las opiniones de los/las profesionales de la educación.

Palabras clave: Proyecto de dirección, director/a de centro, legislación educativa, personal docente.

概要

本研究的目的是在探索西班牙五个大区现有的不同法规后，了解教育专业人士对学校管理项目 (PdD) 的看法，以便提出更加统一的建议。

我们使用定性研究方法分析五个大区的不同立法,同时也使用定量研究方法,通过对 530 名教育领域专业人士的问卷调查结果进行分析。

结果表明,不同大区的法规存在一定差异。教育专业人士认为 PdD 文本应该有 30 页左右,最重要的部分是中心的目标、行动方针和组织。大多数人认为应将其提交给学校理事会,在通知和交存之间应相隔 3 个月的时长,并且需要事先培训。在差异分析中,研究在年龄、性别和职业概况方面观察到差异。

结论得出了接受 PdD 专门培训的重要性,并考虑教育专业人士的意见,制定规范。

关键词:管理项目、中心主任、教育立法、师资队伍。

Аннотация

Цель данного исследования - выяснить мнение специалистов в области образования о проекте управления (ПУ) учебными заведениями, изучив различные существующие нормативные акты в пяти автономных сообществах (ССАА), чтобы иметь возможность сделать более унифицированное заключение.

Использовалась как качественная методология - анализ различных законодательных актов в пяти автономных сообществах, так и количественная - анализ результатов, полученных с помощью анкеты, в которой приняли участие 530 специалистов в области образования.

Результаты показали, что существуют некоторые расхождения в нормативных актах различных автономных округов. Специалисты в области образования считают, что объем ПУ должен составлять около 30 страниц и что наиболее важными разделами являются цели, направления деятельности и организация работы школы. Большинство из них считают, что он должен быть представлен коллективу школы и школьному совету, что время между обращением и представлением должно составлять 3 месяца и что для этого требуется предварительная подготовка. При дифференциальном анализе наблюдались различия в зависимости от возраста, пола и профессионального профиля.

В заключение следует отметить важность специальной подготовки по ПУ и необходимость унификации нормативных документов с учетом мнения специалистов в области образования.

Ключевые слова: Управленческий проект, директор школы, образовательное законодательство, преподавательский состав.

Introduction

Over the years, numerous studies on school management have been carried out on different topics: management models, selection processes, accreditation and training, among others, although, as Gairín (2010) commented, there are various reasons, such as workload, responsibilities and professional development prospects that make school management an unattractive profession.

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the school Management Project (MP) based on the opinions of different education professionals from different ARs (head teachers, members of management teams, inspectors, non-university teaching staff, whether pre-school, primary or secondary, and university teaching staff, among others), seeing as all of them can intervene directly or indirectly in the selection pro-

cess for head teachers (as indicated in article 133 of chapter 4 of Organic Law 2/2006, which has not been modified in the wording of Organic Law 3/2020). To this end, different fundamental aspects of the MP have been analysed, such as its length, the sections it should include, the time that should exist between the date of the appeal for applications and the date of submission, etc.

As Díaz and García (2019) pointed out, “the Spanish management model revolves around three axes, whose duties involve being: (a) a representative of the educational administration, (b) a pedagogical and management leader responsible for the educational project and (c) a previously certified professional in management skills to access the post” (p. 7). Therefore, access to school management is influenced both by mental factors (preparation of the management project, presentation and discussion of the project before the educational community, etc.) (Rodríguez et al., 2013) and by academic merits, professional skills, leadership ability and experience in the field of management (Silva et al., 2018); therefore, access to management subsequently has an impact on the professional identity of the manager and their professional performance (Bolívar & Ritacco, 2016).

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (2019) explained that project-based management is not the same as a management model in which the project is just another element in the process of accessing a management position:

In the first case, the management project makes continuous reference to managerial performance and preferably, is evaluated on the basis of achievement indicators at different times and with different effects, whereas submitting a project solely as a requirement to participate in the corresponding call for applications, without subsequent performance being based on such a project, undermines the meaning and scope of its work. (p.5)

The MP, as established in Article 135 of Organic Law 3/2020, which regulates the management of public schools, is one of the necessary requirements to participate in the merit-based competition to become a head teacher.

For the selection of headmasters or headmistresses in public schools, with the exception of Integrated Vocational Training Centres, the Education Administrations will call a merit-based competition and will establish the objective criteria and the procedure for assessing the project presented and the candidate's merits, which will include the successful completion of a training programme on the development of the management function, given by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training or by the Education Administrations of the autonomous regions, valid throughout the national territory. (p.79)

We note that, as it is conceived in current legislation, the MP becomes a key factor in the development of school autonomy and, at the same time, constitutes a determining element in access, in the performance of management and in the evaluation of their time in charge. According to various studies (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; Marina et al., 2015), the role of head teachers has evolved to prioritize a more pedagogical function, an aspect that should be taken into account in the development of the MP. Therefore, the head teacher should be able to exercise their mandate with autonomy from both the administration and the teaching staff, and their management should be focused on achieving objectives that improve the school and benefit the educational community as a whole, prioritizing the students.

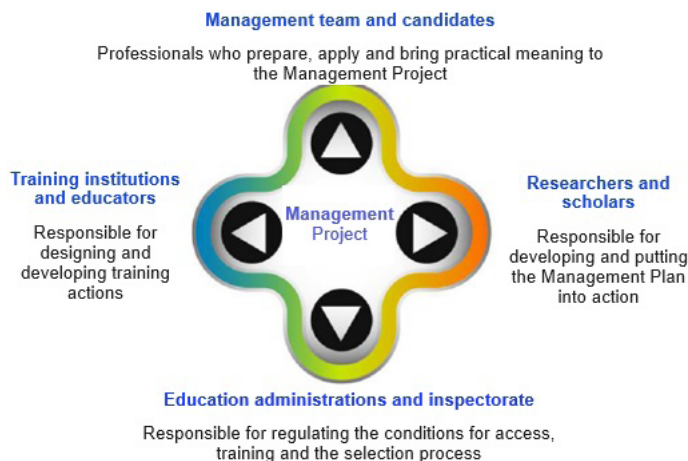
Consequently, the MP is a requirement for the path to a basic management position, but as Polo and Puertas (2016) pointed out, it should go beyond being a requirement and be, during the head teacher's time in charge, the reference point for action, thus providing consistency and continuity to school life. It should establish the appropriate set of activities and establish a reference framework to present the basic lines of action and strategies that a management team intends to carry out throughout its term. Aguirregabiria and García (2019) even cited "its importance and usefulness, in the experience of head teachers and their teams, and to what extent the preparation of the project helps them in their performance and contributes to better management of the school" (p.471).

According to Teixidó (2017), the MP is of shared interest to the following members of the education system, who view it from complementary perspectives (Figure 1):

- a. Active head teachers (as professionals who develop it, apply it and give it practical meaning).
- b. Teachers aspiring to stand as candidates (as an instrument that operationalizes and enables access to the post).
- c. Education administrations (as the bodies responsible for regulating access to management and in-service training).
- d. Education inspectorate (as it has a major role in the selection process and is also responsible for evaluation).
- e. Training structures and institutions (as those responsible for the design and development of training actions).
- f. Educators (in charge of teaching and guiding candidates in the development of the MP). It should be noted, as indicated by Teixidó et al. (2018), that the initial training of school head teachers falls to the inspectorate, active head teachers, university teachers (who mostly provide training in master's degrees), civil servants from the corresponding administration, non-school management experts (either from the administration or external), among others.

Figure 1

The Management Project as a matter of interest for various organizational actors



Since the Organic Law 2/2006, the various autonomous regions with jurisdiction over education have been developing their own regulations on the process of selecting head teachers. All of them stipulate what the MP should contain, how long it should be, the period between the appeal and submission, etc.

Polo and Puertas (2016) found that there is no homogeneous approach to which aspects should be included in a school management plan throughout Spain, and that the priority that should be given to each of the sections is not sufficiently clear in terms of their assessment by the educational administration and the school. In designing the MP, we must take into account the basic regulations that define the responsibilities of the head teacher, as set out in Article 132 of Organic Law 2/2006 on Education, of 3 May, and which is worded exactly the same way in Organic Law 3/2020 of 29 December, which amends the Education Act. It should also be borne in mind that there are resolutions in the various autonomous regions (AR) announcing merit-based competitions for the selection and appointment of school heads in public schools. These resolutions not only establish the criteria for selection on the basis of a merit-based competition among career civil servant teachers who teach some of the subjects in the school, but also establish as a requirement that candidates be certified as having passed a training course on the development of the management role, as well as the presentation of a management project that includes, among others, the objectives, lines of action and evaluation of the project.

Consequently, there are several questions that can be asked about the MP: does the legislation vary by AR? What should the composition and scope of the MP be? How much time should elapse between the appeal for applications and the submission of the MP? What guidelines could be given to candidates for the proper preparation of the MP?

Objectives

- To compare the regulations of the different ARs on the preparation of the MP.
- To ascertain the opinion of education professionals on the MP in public schools.
- To analyse the composition, length, time between the call and the submission of the MP.
- To propose guidelines for improving the MP.

Methods

Firstly, documentary research was carried out comparing different legislation on MPs in different ARs, using the methodology of Comparative Education (Caballero et al., 2016).

Subsequently, a methodological triangulation was carried out since, in addition to comparing different legislation, a quantitative methodology was used, applying a closed questionnaire. The use of methodological triangulation, as indicated by Jiménez and Torres (2021), enables the results to be more effective and valid through the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

It should be noted that the qualitative analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti while the descriptive and inferential analysis was conducted using SPSSx v27.

Sample

A purposive sampling was carried out based on the database of education professionals that we have at GROC¹ (Grup de Recerca en Organització de Centres) which currently has more than 4500 entries on the mailing list and has forged its own space in the Catalan and Spanish educational panorama. A paper questionnaire was administered to all attendees from different ARs at the conference entitled "The Management Project in the access to the post (JorDi-2017)²" which took place on 11 November 2017 in Palafrugell (Girona) and aimed to bring together head teachers and other members of the educational community from various ARs (members of management teams, members of the educational administration, inspectors, non-university teachers whether early childhood, primary or secondary education, and university teachers). A total of 115 education professionals took part in the conference, and once it was over, the on-line instrument continued to be passed on to those who had been invited, but for various reasons had not attended, until the end of 2020, seeing as the regulations had not changed during this period, thus achieving a sample of 530 professionals.

Among the 530 education professionals in the sample, 45.7% were men and 54.3% were women, 42.1% came from Catalonia, while 57.9% came from other ARs, specifically Andalusia, the Basque Country, Madrid, Galicia, Cantabria, Valencia, Murcia, Aragon, the Canary Islands and Alicante. The majority are head teachers or members of management teams (53.4% of the sample), 20.8% are non-university teachers and the rest are university teachers (10.4%), inspectors (6%), etc. (Table 1). It should be noted that the university teachers who participated in the research had knowledge of the MP.

Table 1

Professional profile of the sample

	Frequency	%
Education Administration	25	4.7
Head Teacher	205	38.7
Member of the management team	78	14.7
Inspector	32	6.0
Pre-school, primary or secondary school teachers	110	20.8
University lecturer	55	10.4
Other	25	4.7

The majority of participants (40.2%) were between 46 and 55 years old, followed by 25.5% who were between 36 and 45 years old and 24.9% who were between 56 and 65 years old. Only 6.2% were 35 years old or younger and 3.2% were 66 years old or older.

1 <http://www.joanteixido.org/esp/queesgroc.php>

2 <http://fordires.org/index.php/jornades-de-direccio-ca/jordi-2017-palafrugell>

It is worth noting that 71.5% have experience in school management and of these 38.7% are currently working as head teachers (Table 2).

Table 2

Management experience

	Frequency	%
No experience	151	28.5
6 years or less	164	30.9
between 7 and 12 years old	127	24.0
13 years and over	88	16.6
Total	530	100.0

Instrument

An ad hoc questionnaire (Appendix 1) was drawn up with the aim of ascertaining the opinion of the educational community on access to the post of head teacher. Various experts in school management training participated in its preparation. It consists of a section on demographic information about the participants (gender, age, professional profile, origin, experience in school management and whether or not they are currently working) and another section aimed at gathering information on the MP: a) the evaluation of the different sections of the MP according to the degree of optionality or obligation given by the education professionals on a Likert scale from 0 to 5 with integer numerical values, b) the maximum length and c) the time between the date of call and the date of submission.

As explained in the sample section, the first questionnaires were administered on paper while later ones were administered online (Google Forms) in order to achieve a larger sample size.

It should be noted that confidentiality was respected at all times and that the results of this research will be presented at future management days.

Results

Comparative analysis of the regulations of the different ARs on the preparation of the MP

Table 3 compares the range of contents of the MP established in the different regulations of various ARs (characteristics of the school, objectives, development of the project and community participation, development of the project and community participation and lines of action). The contents are presented by AR: a) Andalusia (Resolution of 19 November 2019, of the Directorate General for Teachers), b) Basque Country (Order of 10 January 2018, of the Regional Ministry of Education and Human Resourc-

es Management; Cercera et al., 2012), c) Madrid (Resolution of 3 March 2016, of the Directorate General of Human Resources of the Department of Education, Youth and Sport of the Region of Madrid), d) Catalonia (Resolution EDU/160/2019, of 28 January 2019, of the Department of Education) and e) Galicia (Order of 14 March 2019, of the Department of Education, University and Vocational Training).

Table 3

Contents of the MP according to different ARs

Andalusia	Basque Country	Madrid	Catalonia	Galicia
Characteristics of the school				
Knowledge of the school and its environment	Knowledge of the school	Analysis of the most relevant characteristics of the school	An updated diagnosis of the school	An analysis of the situation
Objectives				
Objectives of the MP: main aims and proposals in the implementation and development of the MP.	Definition of the objectives to be achieved by the end of the project. the development of the management project.	Basic objectives of the management programme.	The objectives to be achieved in the pedagogical field, linked to the improvement of educational results.	The objectives of the project.
Project development and community participation				
Measures aimed at promoting the participation of families in school life. Development of the management project in its connection with the school plan.	Participation of internal and external actors. Forecasts for the development and monitoring of the project.	Concrete plans to achieve these objectives.	The approach of educational attention to students within the framework of an inclusive system, and which considers co-education and the gender perspective. The elements for deepening the performance of delegated leadership and for promoting the participation of the school community in the school.	The resources and organization of the school. Timing

Andalusia	Basque Country	Madrid	Catalonia	Galicia
Lines of action				
Intervention strategies for educational leadership development. Specific lines of action to improve the quality and equity of education at the school.	Description of the main lines of action for achieving the objectives and forecast of resource requirements. Development of pedagogical leadership.	General lines of action.	Actions planned for the development and implementation of the educational project.	Lines of action.
Evaluation				
Monitoring and evaluation of the management project	Promotion of evaluation and management of change.	Form of assessment of the project itself.	Indicators for the evaluation of the exercise of leadership, in accordance with the progress indicators of the educational project. Mechanisms for accountability to the bodies of control and participation.	Indicators for evaluation and areas for improvement

It should be noted that candidates must structure their papers on the basis of the contents stipulated in the regulations of the different ARs. If we review the maximum number of pages of the MP, we can see that there are some discrepancies (Table 4). However, most opt for 30 pages. Most regions opt for less than one month between the date of publication of the appeal and the date of submission of the MP.

Table 4

Comparison in relation to the maximum number of pages and the time between the date of publication of the call and the date of submission of the MP

Autonomous Region	Number of pages	Time between publication and deposit of the MP
Andalusia	50	2 months
Basque Country	15	Less than one month
Madrid	30	Less than one month
Catalonia	30	Less than one month
Galicia	30	Less than one month

As we have observed, there are different criteria in relation to content, length, etc. For this reason, the aim of this paper is to extract some recommendations that can help in the preparation of the MP.

Education professionals' assessment of the MP

Components of the MP

Table 5 shows that, in general, the ratings of the components of the MP, according to the degree of optionality or obligation, given by the different education professionals, are high. The asymmetry coefficient, which is a value that allows us to establish the degree of symmetry (or asymmetry) of a distribution, being negative in all the sections, shows that the scores are mostly high. It is worth noting that the rating scale was numerical with integer values from 0 to 5 and the lowest mean is 3.21. We note that all standard deviations are low, so that in general the values are fairly clustered around the mean. The most highly rated section is that of the objectives ($\bar{x}=4.87$), followed by the lines of action ($\bar{x}=4.80$), the organization of the school ($\bar{x}=4.62$), the diagnosis of the situation ($\bar{x}=4.58$) and accountability ($\bar{x}=4.43$). It is interesting to note the kurtosis value, which measures the degree of clustering of values, as it is precisely these 5 items that have the highest and most positive kurtosis value, which indicates that the participants' responses are highly clustered around 4 and 5. On the other hand, the lowest rated sections, with scores below 4, are the annexes ($\bar{x}=3.21$), the bibliographical references ($\bar{x}=3.53$) and the title page ($\bar{x}=3.93$), and these three are the only sections with a negative kurtosis, which indicates that there has been a greater dispersion in the different responses of the participants.

Table 5

Average ratings of the MP components

	Average	Standard deviation	Asymmetry	Kurtosis
Home page	3.93	1.324	-.878	-.558
Index	4.42	.994	-1.730	2.179
Presentation of the candidate(s)	4.30	1.036	-1.500	1.575
Diagnosis of the institutional situation	4.58	.765	-2.241	5.823
Objectives	4.87	.515	-5.137	31.016
Lines of action	4.80	.577	-3.892	18.433
Organization of the school	4.62	.683	-2.160	5.579
Timing	4.38	.797	-1.166	1.064
Indicators	4.41	.856	-1.632	2.815
Accountability	4.43	.844	-1.730	3.272

	Average	Standard deviation	Asymmetry	Kurtosis
Community participation	4.33	.886	-1.446	2.048
Leadership	4.36	.840	-1.480	2.470
References: bibliographic, webgraphic, normative	3.53	1.114	-.428	-.466
Annexes	3.21	1.164	-.282	-.617

The Anova test was applied to contrast the different demographic variables with the sections of the MP and the following statistically significant relationships were found:

- Those who are currently working as head teachers rate the following items lower: the cover page ($p=.022$), the presentation of the candidate or candidacy ($p=.000$), the objectives ($p=.004$), the timing ($p=.042$) and the participation of the community ($p=.004$).
- By age range, all age groups give greater importance to objectives and lines of action, in this order, except for those over 66 years of age who, while also choosing objectives as their first option, rate leadership as their second choice.
- Those under 36 years of age rate the title page ($p=.006$) and bibliographical references ($p=.003$) the highest; those aged 36 to 45 rate the lines of action ($p=.042$) and the organization of the school ($p=.016$) and those aged 46 to 55 rate accountability ($p=.001$) the highest.
- By professional profile, all give greater importance to the objectives and lines of action, in this order, except for the education administration, which reverses the order.
- Inspectors value diagnosis ($p=.016$), objectives ($p=.006$), indicators ($p=.002$) and accountability ($p=.039$) the most. University teaching staff most value the organization of the school ($p=.001$), the references ($p=.000$) and the annexes ($p=.004$). Finally, non-university teaching staff valued the presentation of the application the most ($p=.042$).

Maximum length of the MP

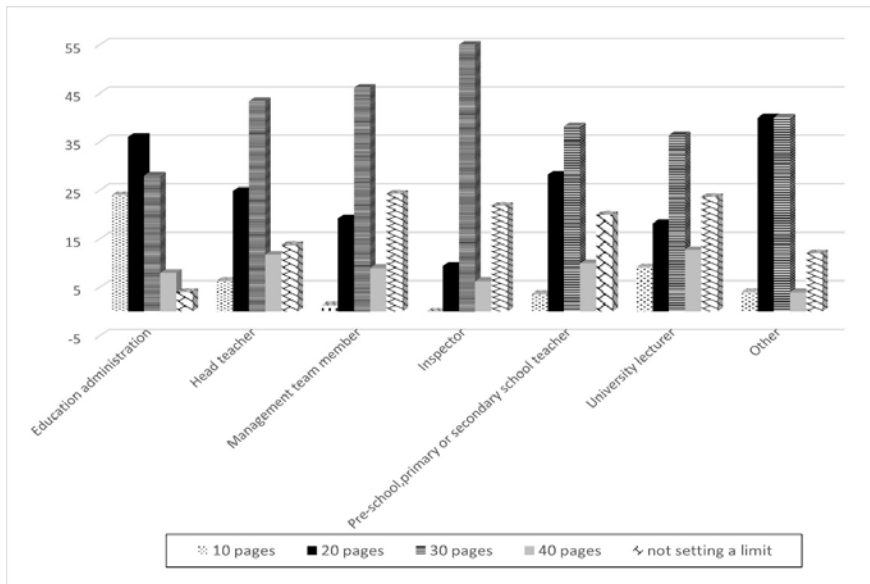
It was observed that the majority (66.6%) considered that the MP should be between 20 and 30 pages, with a greater number of professionals opting for 30 pages. The χ^2 test was applied between the page length question (10, 20, 30, 30, 40 or no limitation) and the different demographic variables and the following statistically significant differences were observed:

- Women consider that it should be between 20 and 40 pages while men opt for 10 pages or no limit ($p=.001$).
- The intermediate age ranges (36-45 and 46-55) opt for 30-40 pages while older or younger people opt for a lower number of pages ($p=.002$).
- All profiles mostly recommend not exceeding 30 pages, except for the education administration which opts for a limit of 20 pages. The general preference is to opt

for a project that is neither too short (10 pages) nor too long (40 pages). Finally, it is noteworthy that both members of the management teams and university teaching staff favour not setting a limit as the second option ($p=.003$) (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Maximum length of the MP by occupational profile



Time between the date of the appeal and the date of submission

There is no clear agreement among the participants about the time needed to prepare the MP, although the most popular option, with 36.5% acceptance, is 3 months (Table 6).

In the differential analysis we found the following significant differences:

- Men consider that less time is needed than women (3 months or less versus 4 months) ($p=.000$).
- Those under 36 choose 4 months, those between 36 and 45 choose 3 months and those over 45 choose 2 months ($p=.000$). We observe that as age increases, less time is considered necessary. This is due to accumulated experience.
- By professional profile (Figure 3), educational administration, inspectors and head teachers believe that a 2-month timeframe is adequate; university teachers 3 or 4 months and non-university teachers 4 months ($p=.000$).

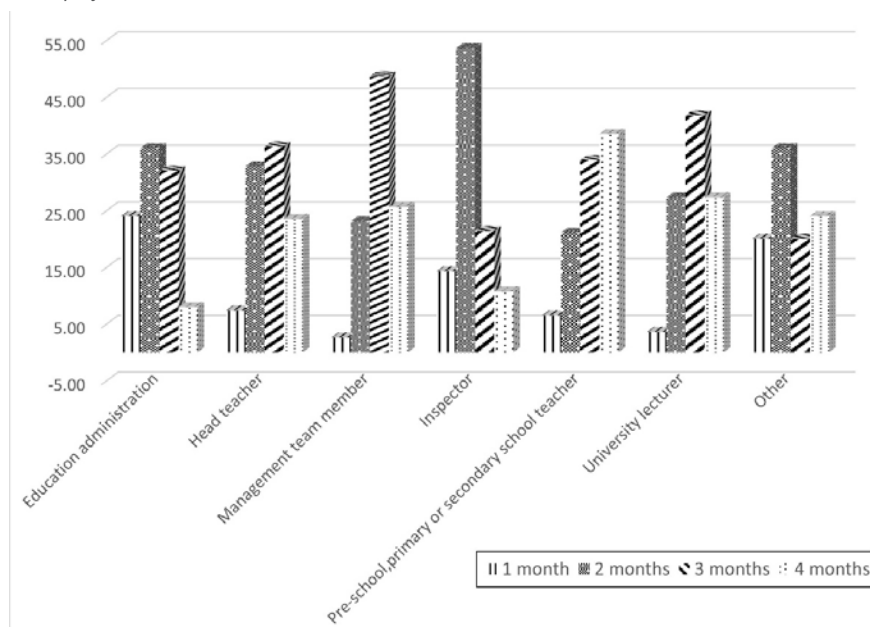
Table 6

Time between the date of the appeal and the date of submission of the MP for applicants to develop a good project

	Frequency	%
1 month	41	7.8
2 months	156	29.8
3 months	191	36.5
4 months	136	26.0
Total	524	100.0

Figure 3

Time between the date of the appeal for proposals and the date of submission of the MP by professional profile



Other considerations about the MP

Table 7 shows a series of statements about the MP rated by education professionals on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). On the one hand, we see that the highest rated statements (with scores above 4 and higher negative asymmetries) are those with the highest kurtosis, i.e. those with the most clustered responses around the mean:

- It must be presented to the School Board and to the School Council.

- Its development is a planning exercise
- Requires prior training

On the other hand, the lowest rated statements show negative kurtosis, which indicates that there is greater dispersion in the responses, and asymmetries around 0:

- There are different ways of understanding this.
- It is a document of personal authorship of the candidate.
- Its conception is technocratic.
- Excessive importance is given to the selection of the head teacher.

Table 7

Statements about the MP rated by education professionals, ranked from highest to lowest rating

	Average	Standard deviation	Asymmetry	Kurtosis
The MP must be presented to the School Board and the School Council.	4.57	.853	-2.398	5.866
The preparation of the MP is a planning exercise.	4.44	.814	-1.654	3.045
The preparation of the MP requires prior training	4.12	.952	-1.267	1.727
The MP has to contain the proposed management team: director of studies, secretary, etc.	4.03	1.123	-.983	.091
Candidates should have full autonomy in the preparation of the MP.	4.03	.985	-.916	.468
The preparation of the MP is of considerable complexity.	3.70	.981	-.587	.077
There are different ways of understanding the MP	3.44	1.203	-.453	-.563
The MP is a document of personal authorship of the candidate.	3.41	1.284	-.455	-.790
The conception of the MP that emerges from the LEC and the LOMCE (education laws) is technocratic.	3.40	1.052	-.350	-.206
Too much importance is given to the MP in the selection of the head teacher.	2.82	1.249	-.020	-.982

From the differential analysis by professional profile, applying the χ^2 test, it can be drawn that:

- University teaching staff are the most likely to consider that the MP should contain the proposed the management team ($p=.000$), that it should be presented to the Boards and the School Council ($p=.000$), that there are different ways of understanding it ($p=.000$) and that its conception, as it can be deduced from the LOE and the LOMLOE (education laws), is technocratic ($p=.001$).
- Both head teachers and members of management teams attach great importance to the fact that candidates have full autonomy in its development ($p=.003$) and that it is a planning exercise ($p=.000$).
- Inspectors are the most likely to indicate that its preparation requires prior training ($p=.025$).
- Finally, non-university teaching staff are the most likely to consider that too much importance is given to the MP in the selection of the head teacher ($p=.000$) and that it is very complex to draw up ($p=.020$).

Discussion

As can be seen in the first section of the results, there is a state law governing competitions for head teachers, although each autonomous community has jurisdiction over education and can define different criteria within the competition. The first objective has been met by drawing up a comparative table of the different regulations in the five ARs (Andalusia, the Basque Country, Madrid, Catalonia and Galicia) on the preparation of the MP (Table 3). It can be seen that all of them attach importance to its objectives and to taking into account the characteristics of the school. It can also be seen that all five regions deal with the development of the project and with participation. For example, the autonomous community of Andalusia talks about measures aimed at family participation and the connection with the PEC (school-based education project), and the autonomous community of Catalonia considers educational attention to pupils within the framework of an inclusive system that takes into account co-education and the gender perspective.

Finally, the five regions analysed take into account both the lines of action and the evaluation of the project. On the one hand, the Basque Country takes into account the development of pedagogical leadership, which is in line with García-Garnica and Caballero (2019), who commented that “management leadership is a fundamental factor in promoting processes of innovation, change and educational improvement. However, in Spain, there is a predominance of management that does not exercise pedagogical leadership” (p.83). On the other hand, in relation to evaluation, mechanisms for accountability to the bodies of control and participation are more highly regarded in Catalonia than in other regions.

In relation to the second objective, we can observe that the objectives and lines of action are the sections of the MP of public schools considered most important by education professionals. On the other hand, the lowest rated sections are the references and annexes. The inspectors, in addition to valuing the objectives, attach great importance to the diagnosis of the institutional situation, the indicators and accountability. We also observe that the older ones value accountability the most, as they are the ones who have been in office longer and, therefore, have a greater awareness of the end of the management term. On the other hand, middle-aged people value the management sections more: lines of action and organization of the school.

With reference to the third objective, which seeks to ascertain the opinion of education professionals on the MP of public educational centres (assessing the length, the time between the announcement for applications and the submission, etc.), we can see that 30 pages is largely agreed to be the accepted maximum length. This result is in line with the comparison made in Table 3, on the contents of the MP according to the different ARs, where we also see that in most of the announcements for applications a maximum length of 30 pages was required. However, there is an exception, namely those over 56 years of age and the educational administration opt for a maximum length of 20 pages, as they prefer an MP in which the candidate selects the most important aspects.

Most opt for 3 months between the appeal for applications and the submission of the MP. As age increases, the time is shorter: the youngest opt for 4 months while the oldest opt for 2 months, and differentiating by professional profile, administration prefers shorter periods for the resolution of competitions while participants prefer to have more time to prepare the MP. If we take into account the appeals for applications in the different ARs analysed in the theoretical framework (Table 3), we see that most opt for even shorter periods (1 month or less), which means less time to prepare the MP, although it is true that candidates can start preparing it before the possible appeal for applications, since the ideal time for a good project would be 3 months.

Different aspects related to the MP were also assessed. Among them, the one that was most widely accepted, especially by head teachers and management teams, was that the MP should be presented to the School Board and the School Council because it is very important that the whole educational community, as well as knowing the MP that the management team will develop in the future in the school, can give their opinion on it, seeing as if they win the competition, it will have a direct impact on the community. The idea is that the MP should not end up being a mere document of intentions, which is why it is interesting to include elements that are unique to each school.

The second most valued statement, especially by head teachers, was that the preparation of the MP is a planning exercise. As expected, head teachers have experience in the preparation of the MP and consider it one of the cornerstones in the performance of the post and, therefore, they value the importance of new head teachers carrying out the task of planning and adapting it to reality.

The third most valued option is that the preparation of the MP requires prior training and this is endorsed by the opinion of the inspectors. This aspect is in line with Azpil-laga et al. (2021) who also considered that training in the field of education should respond to collective needs and result in the planning of a joint project with shared common objectives.

On the other hand, the least accepted option is that "too much importance is given to the MP in the selection of the head teacher". This indicates that members of the educational community believe that the MP is a good tool in the selection of head teachers.

In conclusion, and in view of the fourth and last objective, which is to propose guidelines to improve the MP, it is possible to deduce the importance of the existence of training in the development of the MP. In the syllabi of the refresher courses in management skills on the development of the management function (Royal Decree 894/2014, of 17 October), there is a module corresponding to the MP (Module VI), in which some of the contents are simply covered, but the preparation of an MP as an exercise is not studied. Doing so would provide a series of guidelines to help future head teachers. This training should include the preparation of an MP adapted to the

school and the community, and deal with the different sections, giving each of them the importance they deserve.

Recommendations for improvement, based on this work, can be drawn from the present study:

- Inform candidates of the training programmes that exist in their community for the preparation of their MP.
- The need for sufficient time to be able to prepare and present a good project after the appeal for proposals. Currently, as has been observed in the different appeals for applications, the time available to candidates is not entirely sufficient and, unless the regulations are changed, they ought to start the first steps of their preparation before the appeal for applications.
- It is important for the candidate to have a good knowledge of the regulations of the Autonomous Region where they are competing.
- Make candidates aware of the importance of adapting the MP to the community and including elements that are unique to the school. Consequently, the candidate should carry out a study of the school's reality, researching the needs and expectations of the members of the community, in order to improve it and create a positive climate for coexistence.
- Draw up objectives that are directly related to the needs of the school, with a clear forecast of indicators for monitoring and evaluation.
- It would also be important for the MP to take into account the different projects of the school (Programmes, School Education Project, school reports, etc.) as well as joint actions with other institutions, services and centres in the surrounding area; therefore, the candidate, upon applying to the school, should consult the documentation related to the same.
- The MP should also promote the involvement of families and take into account attention to diversity.
- Prioritize teamwork based on the candidate's leadership by giving responsibilities to community members.
- Define a priority of actions to be taken into account in case too many issues arise during the academic year and it is not possible to carry out all the planned actions.
- Inform candidates of the importance of presenting the MP to the Board and the School Council so that they can give their opinion on it and so that the candidates can improve it.

In the near future, the results of this work will be presented for discussion at a conference to which pre-school, primary and secondary school teachers, members of management teams, inspectors, among others, from the different ARs will be invited to participate. It would also be interesting to examine in greater depth the implications of the MP in the sphere of management, leadership and the institutional guidelines that an MP could offer in its development. Finally, it would be important to examine in greater depth the type of training, both initial and continuous, considered to be most appropriate both for the preparation of a good MP and for better development of the post.

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Annex

Questionnaire

1. Gender Male Female

2. Age

35 years old or younger 36 to 45 years old 46 to 55 years old 56 to 65 years old 66 years and over

3. Autonomous Region

4. Professional Profile

Education Administration Head of school Member of the management team Inspector Pre-primary and primary school teacher or secondary school teacher University lecturer Other

5. Are you currently working as a head teacher? Yes No

6. Experience in the management of an educational establishment

No experience 6 years or less between 7 and 12 years
13 years or more

7. Assessment of the different sections of the MP according to the degree of optionality or obligation given by the education professionals.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Home page						
Index						
Presentation of the candidate(s)						
Diagnosis of the institutional situation						
Objectives						
Lines of action						
Organization of the school						
Timing						
Indicators						
Accountability						
Participation of the community						
Leadership						
References						
Annexes						
Other						

10. What should be the maximum length of the Management Project?

10 pages 20 pages 30 pages 40 pages no limit

11. How much time should there be between the date of the appeal and the date of submission of the MP for applicants to be able to develop a good project?

1 month 2 months 3 months 4 months

11. Rate the following statements about the MP?

	0	1	2	3	4	5
The MP must contain the proposed management team: director of studies, secretary, etc.						
The MP must be presented to the School Board and the School Council						
The MP document is compiled by the DoS candidate						
Too much importance is given to the MP in the selection of the head teacher						
There are different ways of understanding the MP						
Candidates should have full autonomy in preparing the MP						
Preparation of the MP is a planning exercise						
The conception of the MP that emerges from the LEC and the LOMCE is technocratic						
The preparation of the MP is of considerable complexity						
The preparation of the MP requires prior training						
Add a new statement						
